DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 206 FL 016 522

AUTHOR Dale, Terry Corasaniti
TITLE Limited-English-Proficient Students in the Schools: Helping the Newcomer. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Dec 86
CONTRACT 400-86-0019
NOTE 4p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Advising; Counseling Services; Cultural Awareness; Elementary Secondary Education; Helping Relationship; Information Dissemination; *Limited English Speaking; Organizational Communication; Parent Participation; Peer Relationship; Public Schools; *Pupil Personnel Services; Scheduling; *School Orientation; *School Role; *Social Support Groups; Student Needs; Student Placement; Student School Relationship; Translation
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

Limited-English-proficient (LEP) students and their parents need a network of support to familiarize themselves with school routines, so they may understand and comply with school rules and regulations, take advantage of many school-related services, and successfully follow their course of study. Administrators can help by ensuring that information about new LEP students is available to school personnel, parents, and students. This includes having names of interpreters who can be called on and making available to teachers a list of LEP students and their backgrounds. The most important and challenging task for staff is finding ways to integrate LEP students into academic activities. This requires time and resources, and could include assessing students' level of academic skills in their native language, assessing English proficiency, scheduling intensive English instruction, and conducting regular discussion sessions with school staff and resource people about the students' languages, cultures, and school systems. Students can help by participating in a buddy system pairing an LEP student with either a native English-speaking peer or a student who speaks his own native language. Administrators and teachers should also encourage LEP students and their parents to participate in social and academic activities, particularly to teach about or celebrate their native cultures. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED279206

LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOLS: HELPING THE NEWCOMER

Terry Corasaniti Dale

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

GRT

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL 016 522

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

ERIC Digest

Limited-English-Proficient Students in The Schools: Helping the Newcomer

Prepared by Terry Corasaniti Dale

December, 1986

At The Beginning: Helping The Newcomer

In the 1980's, there is hardly a school in the United States which has not enrolled some number of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Administrators and teachers throughout the country are striving to meet the challenge of integrating these students from the beginning into the social and academic life of their schools.

LEP students and their parents need a network of support to familiarize them with school routines, to help them understand and comply with school rules and regulations, to help them take advantage of many school-related services and, ultimately, to successfully follow their designated course of study. There are a number of ways in which schools can provide such a network to make the transition to schooling in the United States easier.

What Administrators Can Do

One of the most important things administrators can do is to ensure that information about new LEP students is available to all school personnel, parents and students. As the "hub" of the information network, principals, counselors and office personnel should:

1. Have available names of interpreters who can be called on to help register students; to work with counselors and teachers in explaining school rules, grading systems and report cards; and to help when students are called in for any kind of problem or in case of an emergency. Many school systems have a list of such interpreters which is kept in the central office. A school can augment this list or start its own with local business people, senior citizens, college professors, students, and parents who are bilingual and who are available before, during or after school hours. Responsible students who are bilingual can also serve as interpreters when appropriate.

2. Have available for all teachers a list of LEP students that includes information on country of origin and native language, age, the last grade attended in the home country, current class assignments and any and all information available about the students' academic background. Since new LEP students are enrolled in school throughout the year, updated lists should be disseminated periodically. School staff who are kept aware of the arrival of new LEP students can prepare themselves and their students to welcome children from different language and cultural backgrounds.

How The School Staff Can Help

The most important and challenging task facing schools with LEP students is finding expedient ways to integrate new LEP students into the academic activities of the school. In most cases, it is nearly impossible for schools to know in advance how many LEP students will enroll from year to year or to foresee what level of academic skills students will bring with them. Nevertheless, school staff need to have a set of well-planned procedures for placing students in the appropriate classroom, as well as procedures for developing instructional plans, many of which must be developed on an individual student basis. School administrators should provide staff with the time and resources to accomplish this. The following activities are suggested:

1. Assess students' level of skills (including reading and mathematics) in their native language.

2. Assess students' English language proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. [It should be noted here that many school systems with large numbers of LEP students often have a center where all initial assessment is done and from where the information may be sent on to the receiving school. Schools in systems which do not have such "in-take" centers must complete student evaluation themselves.]

3. When class schedules are devised (particularly in intermediate and secondary school), schedule slots for classes where LEP students can be grouped for intensive, special classes in English as a second language and mathematics. LEP students should not be isolated for the entire school day; however, at least in the very beginning, the grouping of students according to English language proficiency or academic skills levels is essential. This is

particularly true for schools with small numbers of LEP students scattered throughout grade levels. Planning ahead for such special groupings avoids disrupting schedules during the school year. The participation of school principals and counselors in this process is essential.

4. Conduct regular information discussion sessions with the school staff and resource people who know something about the students' languages, cultures, and school systems in the various countries of origin. Many schools schedule monthly luncheon sessions where staff who are working in the classroom with the same LEP students may meet and compare notes. Such discussions usually focus on appropriate instructional approaches to be used with LEP students, or how to interpret student behaviors or customs that are unfamiliar to the teacher. These sessions can be invaluable since they may constitute the only time that staff have the opportunity to consult one another, in addition to outside sources, on issues that are vitally important to classroom success.

What Students Can Do

A support network for LEP students is complete only when all students are included and allowed to help in some way. One way to involve the student body is to set up a "buddy system" which pairs new students with students not new to the system. Where possible, LEP students may be paired with responsible students who speak their native language. These student teams go through the school day together so that the newcomers may learn school routines from experienced peers who have gone through the adjustment period themselves.

New LEP students may also be paired with native English-speaking peers. In this way, LEP students begin to learn survival English at the same time that they are getting to know other students in the school. As tutors, student "buddies" may help newcomers with academic work, especially in classes where extra teacher help is not consistently available.

Teachers should initially establish buddy systems in their own classrooms, but student organizations, such as the student council, foreign language clubs, or international student groups can help maintain the systems.

A Final Note: Working Together

Administrators and teachers should encourage LEP students and their parents to participate in social and academic activities. A good way to get them started is to invite them to talk about the history, geography, literature and customs of their home countries in class. Such presentations should be a planned part of the curriculum throughout the year.

Many schools also plan special school assemblies (or even an entire day) to celebrate the cultural diversity of the student body or to spotlight outstanding work done by LEP students. Many other activities may be initiated which give LEP students and their English-speaking peers opportunities to interact and work together.

Schools which see LEP students and their families as rich sources of first-hand information about life in other countries and cultures are very often the most successful in helping LEP students to become productive, contributing members of the school community.

Resources

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education is a federally-funded center which provides information on programs, instructional materials, research and other resources related to the education of LEP students. The Clearinghouse can also provide information on additional networks of federally-funded centers that serve school districts with LEP students. Eligibility for free technical assistance from these centers varies according to funding priorities. For information, write or call:

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
11501 Georgia Avenue, Suite 102
Wheaton, MD 20902
(301)933-9448, or 800-647-0123

For Further Reading

Educating the minority student: classroom and administrative issues. (1984). Rosslyn, VA: Interamerica Research Associates. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 260 600)

Golub, L.S. (1984). *The design, implementation and evaluation of a bilingual placement and monitoring center.* Lancaster, PA: Lancaster School District. (EDRS Document Reproduction Service No. ED 262 055)

Gradisnik, A. and O. Eccerd (comps.). (1984). *Helping schools design and develop bilingual education programs.* Milwaukee, WI: Midwest National Origin Desegregation Center, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Lindfors, J.W. (1980). *Children's language and learning.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Ollila, L.O. (ed.). (1981). *Beginning reading instruction in different countries.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Ovando, D.J. (1985). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: teaching in multicultural contexts.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

OERI
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

This report was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. 400-86-0019. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.